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Message Text

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43
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SCCT-01 SAM-01

IO-13 SSM-03 AID-05 A-01 OPR-02 SY-05 SCS-03 SCA-01

EB-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00 OC-06 CCO-00 ACDA-07 /119 W
---------- 033831
O 180947Z AUG 76
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1534
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 6980

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINS, PINT, MILI, LE
SUBJECT: SECURITY SITUATION IN BEIRUT

1. DURING NIGHT OF AUG 17-18, THERE WAS AGAIN CONSIDERABLE EXCHANGE OF INDISCRIMINATE ROCKET AND ARTILLERY FIRE BETWEEN EAST AND WEST BEIRUT. IN WEST BEIRUT, NUMBER OF SHELLS FELL ON AUB CAMPUS AND CLOSE TO RESIDENCES OF BRITISH AND ITALIAN CHARGES. SEVERAL DAYS AGO, FRENCH CHARGE'S RESIDENCE WAS HIT TWICE DURING SIMILAR NIGHT BOMBARDMENT, AND TWO FRENCH CIVILIAN GUARDS AT FRENCH EMBASSY RESIDENCE WERE KILLED BY SHELL FIRE. UK EMBASSY DRIVER WHO CROSSED TO EAST BEIRUT SEVERAL DAYS AGO REPORTS MANY SHELLS ALSO FALLING THERE AND IN OUTLYING AREAS.

2. ON MORNING AUG 18, BRITISH CHARGE GEOFFREY HANCOCK CALLED AT EMBASSY AND SUGGESTED THAT LEADING WESTERN COUNTRIES SHOULD ISSUE PUBLIC
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APPEAL TO BOTH SIDES IN LEBANESE CIVIL WAR TO CEASE

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THIS INDISCRIMINATE SHELLING, WHICH HAD NO MILITARY PURPOSE AND WAS SIMPLY KILLING AND ENDANGERING INNOCENT CIVILIANS. HANCOCK SAID HE HAD DISCUSSED THIS WITH GERMAN CHARGE VON MALTZAHN, WHO HAS JUST RETURNED TO BEIRUT, AND THAT VON MALTZAHN WOULD BE DISCUSSING THIS TODAY WITH ITALIAN CHARGE SPATAFORA AND FRENCH CHARGE DE LATAILLADE. HANCOCK SAID THAT HE HAD MADE SUCH A REQUEST TO UK GOVT IN EARLY JUNE, AFTER DISCUSSING IT WITH AMB MELOY.
AT THAT TIME, BRITISH GOVT HAD ISSUED SUCH A STATEMENT WHICH WAS CARRIED ON BBC. DEPT PRESS SPOKESMAN ALSO MADE STATEMENT JUNE 10. IMMEDIATELY AFTER THESE STATEMENTS, SHELLING HAD BEEN GREATLY REDUCED, AND HANCOCK BELIEVED THAT THEY HAD HAD SOME EFFECT. HE BELIEVE SEPARATE APPEALS BY LEADING WESTERN COUNTRIES MIGHT HAVE SAME USEFUL IMPACT THIS TIME.

3. EMBASSY BEIRUT STRONGLY SUPPORTS HANCOCK'S SUGGESTION. INDISCRIMINATE SHELLING BETWEEN EAST AND WEST BEIRUT HAS INCREASED NOTICEABLY DURING PAST WEEK, AND IF PRESENT PATTERN CONTINUES, NUMBERS OF DEAD AND INJURED ARE CERTAIN TO INCREASE. EMBASSY THEREFORE RECOMMENDS THAT DEPT PRESS SPOKESMAN MAKE STATEMENT AT NOON BRIEFING AUG 18 THAT USG UNDERSTANDS THAT INDISCRIMINATE EXCHANGE OF ARTILLERY FIRE BETWEEN EAST AND WEST BEIRUT, WHICH HAS INCREASED SUBSTANTIALLY IN RECENT DAYS, IS BECOMING INCREASING DANGER TO LIVES OF ALL NON-COMBATANTS, INCLUDING AMERICAN CITIZENS STILL RESIDENT IN BEIRUT, AND CALLING ON BOTH SIDES TO CEASE THIS ACTIVITY WHICH SEROES NO MILITARY PURPOSE AND ONLY ENDANGERS LIVES OF INNOCENT CIVILIANS. WE SUGGEST THAT THIS STATEMENT BE LESS SPECIFIC AND MORE CLEARLY ADDRESSED TO BOTH SIDES THAN EARLIER ANNOUNCEMENT. IF SECRETARY WERE TO ASSOCIATE HIMSELF WITH THIS STATEMENT, IT WOULD OBVIOUSLY CARRY MORE IMPACT.

4. WE WILL INFORM ADDRESSEES IMMEDIATELY OF RESULTS OF HANCOCK'S EFFORTS WITH OTHER WESTERN
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EMBASSIES HERE, BUT EMBASSY RECOMMENDS DEPT MAKE SUCH STATEMENT INDEPENDENTLY OF WHAT THEY DO, AND THAT STATEMENT THEN BE BROADCAST IMMEDIATELY BY VOA.
HUNT

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NNN

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Disposition Authority: ShawDG
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